

ADDENDUM A Precedent analyses

a) Constitutional Court, Johannesburg (OMM Design Workshop and Urban Solutions)

OMM Design Workshop and Urban Solutions produced a winning scheme for the Constitutional Court, Constitutional Hill in Johannesburg, that is rooted in the country and its people. It is a design that addresses the regional character in terms of material use and functional relationships, as well as acknowledging the history of the site with symbolism integrated into the spatial design (Lipman 2004:16-17).

According to Makin & Masojada (2004:9), the design was fed by the ideas of heritage, dignity, a better future and “the essence of what it means to be alive and human”. The building represents the values of South Africa’s democratic constitution, without ethnic or colonial references. The Court building has been placed on the crossing of the two major routes across the site: north-south and east-west. The Awaiting Trial Block has been demolished to make way for the new Court building and from an urban design point of view; the site is once again integrated with the city grid. The symbolism in this location is to open the once confined space to “create an accessible public open space at the centre of Constitution Hill that celebrated the right to gather” (Makin & Masojada 2004:11).

The building consists of four components: the Court foyer and chamber, the library and administration, the exhibition space and the judges’ chambers. The Court Foyer that serves the major public function of the architectural interior is the important space for this investigation.

Of particular note are “...housed elements, which might attract communal activity – those, like the Court Foyer and long Exhibition Stairs that call for general access – on the edges of the paths and other open spaces, specifically, the Great African Steps.” (Lipman 2004:18). The concept of a tree as symbol for

communal gathering has been utilised in the Court Foyer. The roof is supported by slanting columns that modulate the space. The use of concrete, timber, steel, stone and glass is enhanced by the intangible material, light, that filters through the space. These materials have been selected due to the surface qualities “onto which light would fall and reflect in colour, coolness and warmth, and would show scale, volume, silhouette, relief, soft whiteness and smooth undulating shininess” (Makin & Masojada 2004:13). The movement of the sun during the day changes the character of the interior and the way people feel and experience the space.

The top section of the Court Foyer wall has the following inscribed in all 11 official languages: freedom, dignity and equality; a building that is accessible to all.

b) Philippi public spaces, Cape Town

Philippi Lansdowne public space project (Du Toit and Perrin, in association with Jacques Theron Architects)

The visibility of the site at the corner of Lansdowne Road and Ingulube Drive ensured accessibility to the new public space in Philippi; with the aim of a place that will be appropriated by the community. It addresses the demand for a collective space that can accommodate various functions, and grow and adapt over time with the community (Philippi Lansdowne public space project 2003:56).

The project allowed for the development of a public space within an urban framework that includes various uses. The space is designed around a central court, defined by pedestrian traffic routes between housing areas. The court is framed by a colonnade, 4m x 20m, that defines the forecourt of the open space. This facilitates various mixed uses that are fed by the traffic on the routes to strengthen trade (Philippi Lansdowne public space project 2003:57). The space

is surrounded by housing beyond and therefore centrally located within the community.

Materials have been selected due to durability and robustness; an off-shutter concrete column and beam structure with a gum pole overhead covering defines the public open space. The patterns of light and shade through these structures create a sense of place (Philippi Lansdowne public space project 2003:57).

Joe Gqabi station square (ARG Design and Lucien le Grange Urban Designers and Architects)

The design of the Joe Gqabi station square facilitates the activities of daily commuters using the transport systems within the urban environment of Philippi. The design transformed the environment into a positive space with the application of principles of creating a square. The square forms the forecourt to the station and allows movement between the residential areas behind and the station activities (Klitzner 2005:26).

A multi-function approach is emphasised by the physical elements that define the spaces. Vertical elements define the boundaries of the square that is integrated with surface patterns and a water-feature. Surface treatment, soft landscape elements, illumination, seating and celebratory elements are all integrated into the detail resolution that allows for spatial definition and place-making (Klitzner 2005:26-29).

These aspects will be further investigated in the following chapters with an interpretation of data.

Philippi public transport interchange (Du Toit and Perrin Architects in Association)

The Philippi public transport interchange is a development in a South African informal settlement situated on the Cape Flats. The aim was to establish a

process of transformation in public space, and a legible collection and layout of spaces was necessary in the spatial planning of a combination of diverse trade activities. Connections and links between spaces had to be comprehensive in reinforcing the conception of the place. The article refers to the idea of “urban rooms” defined with edges of colonnades articulating the main areas. This method was aimed at creating a structure related to human scale (Philippi public transport interchange 2002:30). The important activities of the area had to be understood in order to design a space that would add value to the community. These spaces were linked as a cluster of outdoor rooms, with people appropriating it. The design intervention and the legibility of the design still allow for collective interpretation and perception of the spaces.

Philippi community facility precinct and public plaza (City of Cape Town Design Services, Architectural Division)

The aim of the Philippi Community Facility Precinct and Plaza addresses the need to create place, to maximise the attributes, upgrade routes and spaces, and ultimately the potential of the area (The Philippi Community Facility Precinct and Public Plaza 2001:145). The importance of a successful public place, is due to the duration the community spend time outside and thus the need to extend the living environment to the outside. “...because of the inability of private spaces to accommodate daily household needs and activities. Accordingly, urban public spaces (streets, squares, promenades and green spaces) should be seen as representing the primary form of social infrastructure in cities” (Dewar 2003:34).

This development forms part of the ‘dignified places programme’ to encourage informal trade and social interaction. Spaces are defined with column and beam structures that frame the view over the playing fields, steps and brick surrounds for the trees that double as seating and placing trees (Dewar 2003:36). Ceramic mosaics add to the spirit of the place with the introduction of colour and texture. The community has been involved in the implementation of the designs.

The Philippi community facility precinct and public plaza have been identified as a development in public place improvement. The criteria applied in the design of this space will be analyzed in gathering information for this sub-problem. Areas of intervention were identified as the following: providing shelter against elements, surface treatment, and strategic areas to accommodate various numbers of people and community activities. The space defining opportunities are important for the study, together with the community involvement not only in planning, but also in execution. The application of theoretical information is analysed and understood in a South African context.

c) Glass Shutter House, Tokyo (Shigeru Ban)

The Glass Shutter House by architect, Shigeru Ban, has been commissioned by the Tokyo television chef, Yoshiharu Doi with his wife and daughter. The house is fitted on a tight site needed to accommodate various functional requirements ranging from public to private (Webb 2005:82).

The spaces have been divided vertically, but also horizontally within the interior. The ground floor contains the restaurant and kitchen exposed to the restaurant space that opens up to the street and the tapering courtyard on the side. The mezzanine floor houses a semi-private space, the studio that is set back from the front façade. The studio is used for the recording of programmes, conducting classes and family dinners. The third level is set back according to local regulations and is barely noticed from the street that allows for improved privacy even though the building has public functions.

According to Webb (2005:82), Ban experimented with the blurring of physical boundaries. This is made possible with the use of aluminium framed glass shutters that slide up into a recessed roof container and open the 4m x 16m x 8m space to the urban surroundings. The interplay of solid and void, transparency and translucency is all important in the design that addresses a “duality of layers”

(Webb 2005:84). The spatial definition works with the concept of transformation in the changing character of the space. A translucent screen allows for visual contact between inside and outside when the shutters are drawn, once opened, the quality speaks of lightness, permeability and of “varying degrees of exposure and enclosure” with the curtains that wave in the wind (Webb 2005:84). In this open state, the vertical and horizontal structure articulates the volume.

Ban experimented with the traditional approach of flexibility and multi-use spaces in Japanese culture with the combination of public and private spaces, as well as technological materials used in the same design strategy as the traditional application (Webb 2005 84).

The three-dimensional quality is strengthened by the strong form and defining lines of the building. The space is modulated in a contemporary Japanese language, monotone in colour and simplicity in the design. The sense of place is achieved in the nature of the definition, the changing nature of the space during all times of the day, as well as the changing light qualities, natural and artificial. The functions of the public and private spaces will allow for varying degrees of activity and directly influence the character of the space; people, music, food, entertainment versus silence, meditation, family. These aspects contribute to creating place.

d) Whiteinch Cross, Glasgow (Gross Max)

Whiteinch Cross, the urban intervention by Gross Max in Glasgow, Scotland, transforms a redundant site in the city into an urban experience. The corner plot has been defined as an urban public place with the use of elements delineating spaces; a white tower with blue vertical light serve as landmark, two freestanding walls clad in steel define the urban interior and a galvanised steel pergola construction articulates a third plane (Holden 2003:68). The square

surface, paved in sandstone, has been divided into two levels onto which seating is positioned in the shade of the trees that form the overhead canopy.

History has been incorporated into the design by means of the use of materials that remind one of the industrial nature of Glasgow, as well as the inclusion of water flowing across one of the freestanding walls, reminding of the “place for watering horses” for which the site is known (Spens 2003:194).

The design philosophy of Gross Max concludes the concept of layering: “...unravelling the layers of the landscape...” (Holden 2003:68). The integration of the city qualities, artificial and organic, with the history allows for the creation of an identity of the essence of the city (Holden 2003:68, Spens 2003:194).

e) Castelvechio, Verona (Carlo Scarpa)

Carlo Scarpa was requested in 1957 to restore interiors of the Castelvechio. The approach to this intervention is one of subtlety and a sense of discernment for the demolition work to reveal the truth of the building through time. Scarpa, interested in the historical transparency “...wanted to make history come alive by a well-ordered juxtaposition of the fragments” (Los 2002:73).

A search for balance in form and material, craft and tradition and memory and sensuality, had to be obtained in the composition and relationships between spaces and elements. The co-existence of old and new is integrated into the restoration. “His ability to weave his new architecture into the old was accomplished without disrupting the feeling of these buildings and one is virtually unable to articulate the edge between them.” (Dal Co & Mazzariol 1986:259).

The subdued use of materials adds to the sense of place; slaked lime plaster, rough hewn concrete, stone tiles, and steel gratings. Rooms are designed specifically for the particular art piece to be displayed. The use of perspective, light and view in the interior creates emphasis (Los 2002:81-82).

Juxtaposition of various historical layers in the construction of the building is exposed in the truthful communication of history. "...dialogue between different materials from different historical eras, placed close together yet apart. Hence the breaks: the newly laid floors, like carpets, stop some distance short of the walls, while the walls in turn stop short of the ceilings." (Los 2002:74).

The edges and planes of the Castelvecchio and the integration of the windows and doors are investigated in the spatial definition and spatial modulation approaches.

f) Sendero del Pinar de la Algaida, Spain (Ramón Pico and Javier López)

Sendero del Pinar de la Algaida is a previously inaccessible, redundant salt works on the outskirts of El Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain. The site consists of three separate, but dependent ecosystems, swamplands, mudflats and a pine grove draining system. These systems have been integrated with a pedestrian pathway connecting the areas. The aim is to attract people to the area for relaxation, social interaction and contemplation (Mostaedi [s.a.]:168). The many faces of the development allow for the variety of activities; movement and circulation allow for the ever changing experiences.

The development is aimed at sustainability, as recycled materials are used sensitively, permitting restoration of the environment. A sense of place is created by the nature of the surroundings, the "ruggedness and ambiguity of the landscape" that invite contemplation; a specific spirit of place (Mostaedi [s.a.]:168).

g) Garden Pavilion, Pretoria (Comrie & Wilkinson Architects and Urban Designers)

The Garden Pavilion in Pretoria, a private space, follows no stylistic references, but speaks of a building that addresses space, place and tectonics as a design strategy (Steenkamp & Van Rensburg 2002:31). The design concept deals with juxtaposition of solid and void, and opacity and transparency in the spatial definition. The solid structure allows for northwest and southwest views onto the site with the use of window and door openings. The northwest elevation opens up to the garden completely with sliding doors and the southwest elevation is articulated with the repetition of columns. The sloped roof strengthens the vistas from within the interior (Garden Pavilion 2000:22).

The position of the pavilion on the site acknowledges the existing pool and house, as well as the site boundary, and is effectively fitted within these parameters. The structure is modest in scale that allows for an intimate scale (An architecture of discovery 2002:37). A sense of place is established with the integration of function, site light, material use, climate and the juxtaposition of these elements. The creation of a regional identity is enhanced by the selection of neutral materials, off-shutter concrete, timber, stone and glass that shape the experience of the interior (Steenkamp & Van Rensburg 2002:31).

h) Melrose Arch, Johannesburg (Urban Solutions, with Osmond Lange partnership in collaboration with Paul Murrain)

Melrose Arch in Johannesburg has been designed according to the concept of 'new urbanism'. It promotes mixed use connectivity, spaces at human scale, integrated open street system and defined public and private spaces (Schoonraad 2002:44). According to Krige (2002:19), an urban framework is necessary in establishing a unified street language that includes elements of height, volume and materials. Wilson (2004) makes it clear that the development has long-term qualities in the inclusion of mixed use areas that combine residential, retail, hospitality, office and commercial use in a high density application.

Public open spaces have been created by the building edges facing the streets and square (Hermanson 2002:25). Place-making is seen as an important aspect in the creation of a culturally appropriate place. A cultural identity of genuineness, ownership and proudness was created in the material and spatial qualities where buildings meet the ground. Wilson (2004) further says that colour, texture and materials were used in adding quality to the place. Mosaics were used in open public areas as surface treatment and repeated in building detailing.

Social interaction, exchange of information, skills and material goods are all incorporated in this 'new urbanism' development, as all services and activities are provided for in the boundaries of the site. Definition of public and private domains is dealt with on vertical levels, public to the ground and private on higher levels. The social quality is emphasised at night, with lights, music, aromas and continuous interaction.